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GOVERNOR

State of Louisiana
Governor's Office of Homeland Security
and
Emergency Preparedness

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PRESS RELEASE

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GOHSEP TAKES STEPS TO PROTECT GRANT FUNDING FOR EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH

Baton Rouge, LA (October 27, 2011) – Today, the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) reallocated federal homeland security grant funding to new parish grants managers in an effort to keep the money in East Baton Rouge Parish. This move is the result of removing the East Baton Rouge Parish Mayor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (MOHSEP) as the parish grants manager for refusing to follow state and federal guidelines in order to be reimbursed for money spent. East Baton Rouge is the only parish in Louisiana that has not complied with the state and federal guidelines.

The funding is for the Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) which consists of the State Homeland Security Program (SHSP) and Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) grants. The SHSP provides funds to the state and local levels to implement goals that include homeland security strategies and initiatives, which also support the federal initiatives. The UASI focuses on enhancing regional preparedness in major metropolitan areas such as the capitol region and assists in developing systems for prevention, protection, response, and recovery.

GOHSEP has designated the East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office (EBRSO) as the grants manager for the SHSP and UASI grants. At a meeting with GOHSEP Thursday morning and with representatives from Ascension, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberville, Livingston, Pointe Coupee, West Baton Rouge and West Feliciana Parishes, it was determined that any future projects that will utilize regional UASI funding will be coordinated through the Ascension Parish Office of Emergency Preparedness (OEP). Funding in the amount of \$4,033,033.72 from the two federal grant programs will be redirected to the new parish grants managers.

GOHSEP Interim Director Pat Santos said, "Our top priority has always been to make sure the people of East Baton Rouge Parish receive these funds so our people are prepared should a disaster strike our state. That's why we're reallocating these dollars to the East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office.

"We were hopeful we could get this issue resolved with MOHSEP. We spent three years trying to ensure MOHSEP's compliance with federal and state laws, regulations and guidelines. We've

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extended deadlines to allow ample time to make corrections and even offered technical assistance. It is GOHSEP's responsibility as the State Administrative Agency (SAA) to make sure these federal and state guidelines are followed.

"Furthermore, we have not asked MOHSEP to do any more or less than any other parish sub-grantee. In fact, every other parish in Louisiana has complied with the federal and state guidelines. GOHSEP's actions are consistent with federal rules and this move protects the state from risking a federal audit finding concerning the program."

GOHSEP determined there were deficiencies in MOHSEP's application, including:

- Failure to submit complete project applications
- Failure to present potential expenditures to the Parish Emergency Management Advisory Committee (PEMAC)
- Failure to get GOHSEP's, the State Administrative Agency's (SAA), approval on intended expenditures
- Failure to obtain Environmental Historical Preservation (EHP) assessments as required by federal law

MOHSEP will be put on probation for two years. After the two year probationary period, MOHSEP can reapply for the grants.

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